There are multiple Leptospira species that can infect dogs, cats, or humans, and these bacteria have worldwide distribution.

In General
- Prevalence rates vary by region and species, and multiple different wildlife reservoirs exist.
- Organisms are commonly shed in urine; infection is often initiated after ingestion of contaminated water.
  - Alternatively, Leptospira spp infections can occur via direct penetration of intact skin.
- Clinical manifestations vary and depend on the infecting strain and mammalian species infected.
  - Acute inappetence, vomiting, and renal and hepatic inflammation are common in dogs.
  - Clinical illness is less frequently reported in cats.
- Humans can develop leptospirosis. In one study, it was estimated that approximately 10% of infected humans were infected from contact with pets.\(^1\)

Client Communication
- Infection appears to be uncommon for owners of dogs with leptospirosis that are undergoing treatment with appropriate antibiotics.
  - Still, owners should consult their physician, particularly if a family member is immunocompromised or develops fever, muscle aches, or headaches.
- The owner should avoid contact with the urine of the infected pet, use routine household disinfectants to clean areas of urine contamination, and wash hands after handling the infected pet.\(^2\)
- Infected dogs should urinate in an area that is not close to bodies of water or frequented by family members until antibiotic treatment is completed.
- Repeat infection with Leptospira spp can occur.
  - If the source of the primary infection is known, it should be avoided.
- Dogs vaccinated against the 4 most common Leptospira spp serovars are likely to shed fewer organisms if exposed.\(^3\)

References